

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season After Pentecost, Proper 8
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

A Notation about this Week’s Scripture

There are many difficult stories in the Bible that are the stories of the relationship with God and a growing self understanding as God’s people. And we read this one with the perception and understanding of the faithful who remembered and told the story throughout the ages. These Biblical truths are not unlike the hard lessons we sometimes learn in fables or morality plays: Life is not always fair. Things are not always easy - even when we do what is right – and God can seem like a hard taskmaster or judge. And what the writers of Genesis saw as God’s testing of Abraham is not easy to digest. Adults can often use metaphor to see the lesson for us. For children this is harder. Be sensitive to these issues and shape the lesson for your own context.

The Book of Genesis provides foundational stories of our faith, God’s calling of a people, their often-failed responses to God, and God’s steadfast love throughout. The Abraham saga tells of the formation of Israel, beginning with the faithfulness of its patriarch Abraham. Although disillusioned with the wickedness of human beings, God separates out one family line to bring divine blessing to all subsequent families of the world. Abraham, the model of absolute faithfulness, trust and obedience, is symbolic of Israel’s idealized self. At the request of God Abraham has left his homeland to travel to a promised land. He has entertained angels unaware and trusted God’s promise of an heir even at an advanced age.

Theme: This is Only a Test

Before Class

Prepare a bulletin board that says “**God Creates a Great Nation.**” Cut out two squares and a triangle. Write Abraham on one square and Isaac on the other. Write Sarah on the triangle. Put them up on the board during the story. [See Attachment One.] Review story.

You will need: magazines, paper, and tape or glue. If you create the mural of Abraham and Sarah and the stars you will need paper. (To save time you may want to pre-cut the stars). If you have a safe place and the weather permits you may want to draw the mural on the cement/concrete with colored chalk.

Important Note Regarding This Lesson:

There are biblical stories that are not pleasant: stories that, at first, seem to convey a God who is not fair and or kind; stories that are scary and difficult to understand or accept. However, they are in fact part of our scriptural traditions. At the end of these segments, we learn that our God is a loving God who keeps promises.

This is a difficult story and how (and if) you use all of the segments of this lesson is a decision only you as the teacher can make. You know the level of understanding on the part of your children, as well as how prepared their parents are to respond to questions the children may have after leaving class. Choose the parts of this lesson that are appropriate for use in your community.

Beginning

Sometimes tests make people nervous or worried. But tests are a good way of finding things out. If the doctor wants to know how healthy or sick you are, she can test your blood or your temperature. You can take an eye test to find out how well you see and if you need glasses. Scientists make up experiments to test out their ideas so they can discover new things. Your teacher at school needs to know how much you are learning so she gives you tests. If you study for the test it can help you learn and remember. So tests can measure things and tell us where we stand. Sometimes people test one another to try to find out how much they are loved. Do you ever watch to see who Mom is giving the biggest piece of cake to? When you have misbehaved have you ever heard Mom or Dad say, “You are testing my patience?” Sometimes we test or challenge someone to make them stronger. This is a story of a test God made up for one of his people who he loved very much. Let’s find out who it is and if he passes the test. Remind the children this is a story and stories are used to help us learn and understand new things.

Opening Prayer: Dear God help us to be like Abraham who trusted you and put his love for you above all else. Amen.

The Story:

Today’s story comes from the first book of the Bible called Genesis. Genesis means beginnings. It tells the stories of how God made the world. It also tells the stories of how God’s people were trying to get to know God and understand God. Sometimes they got it right and this made God very happy. Sometimes they didn’t understand at all and did some very wrong things as a result. Sometimes they tried to copy the way other people were worshipping different gods and this made God very upset. No matter what the people did, God continued to love and forgive them and over a long period of time the people grew in their understanding of God.

Now there was a man named Abraham who loved and trusted God with all his heart. God appreciated Abraham for his faithfulness and obedience. God chose Abraham to be the father of a new nation called Israel. **[Put Abraham’s square on the board.]** God told Abraham to leave

his comfortable home and travel to a new land that God wanted to give to His people. So without questioning, Abraham packed up his wife, his nephew and their servants and traveled to this new land. **[Put Sarah's triangle on the board.]** Abraham did not know where he was going or what he would find there, but he trusted God and obeyed. He knew God wanted what was good for him. Sometime later God told Abraham that he would make of him a great nation that would serve as a blessing to all the people who would come into the world. Abraham and his wife Sarah did not have any children so Abraham could not understand how this could happen. But Abraham believed that if God said this would happen then it must be so. Abraham and his wife were very, very old, long past the age for having children. When God sent a message to Sarah that she was going to have a baby she laughed. But God kept the promise and Abraham and Sarah had a son. They named him Isaac, which means "God laughs." As God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have as many children as there are stars in the sky. **[Put Isaac's square on the board.]**

Reflection

- That was a very hard test. Do you think Abraham passed the test?
- I wonder if Abraham was glad he did what God asked?
- I wonder if there was a time when you were very worried or scared and God provided you with what you needed.

Activities

Have the children draw pictures of Abraham and Sarah and stars that they can use to make a mural. Or using pictures from magazines, make a collage of what they would take with them if they were moving to a new home.

Sing: Father Abraham [See attachment two]

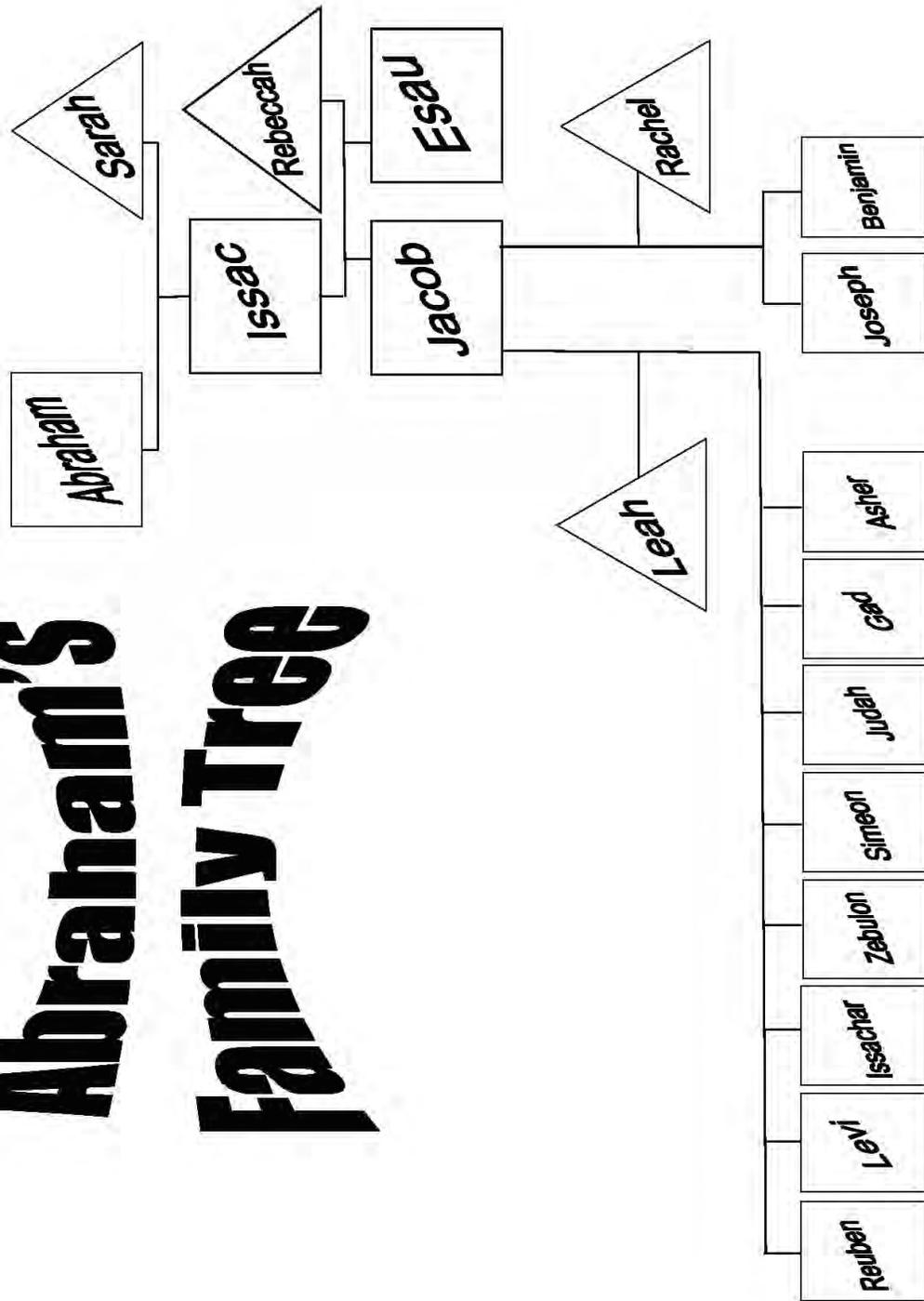
Closing:

Have the children help put all of the supplies away. Invite them to share what they created or have them share about a time they felt close to God.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for showing us your love. Help us to be like Abraham trusting that you will always provide for us. Amen

Abramam's Family Tree



Father Abraham

Father Abraham
Father Abraham had many sons*
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm" and move right arm, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm, left arm" and move both, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm, left arm, right leg" and move all, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg" and move all, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg, chin up" and move all, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
[Yell "right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg, chin up, turn around" and move all, as if marching.]

Father Abraham had many sons
Had many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them
And so are you
So let's just praise the Lord [Yell "right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg, chin up, turn around, sit down" and move all, as if marching. Sit down at the end.]

*You may choose to say children or sons & daughters.

Lesson written by Trudy Ardizzone, 2011

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